FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND MASCULINITY IN FANNY BURNEY'S EVELINA AND SOPHIE VON LA ROCHE'S GESCHICHTE DES FRÄULEINS VON STERNHEIM

BY

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Abstract

Although Frances Burney and Sophie von La Roche wrote and published successful novels in the late eighteenth century, little work has been done to compare these authors' oeuvres. It is conceivable that La Roche's work had an influence on Burney's, and this possibility is especially strong for their first novels. La Roche's first novel, *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, was published in 1771 (an English translation followed in 1776); Burney's first novel, *Evelina*, was published in 1778. Even though these publication dates are close together, *Evelina* is similar to *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* in a variety of aspects, so it is possible that La Roche's work held some sway in Burney's imagination. However, the likelihood also exists that there is some common ancestor of both novels, such as *Clarissa*, by Samuel Richardson, which bears some similarity to both works and was published in 1747 – 48. This thesis will explore the questions of whether La Roche's novel influenced Burney's novel in some way or if Richardson's work functioned as a common ancestor. This thesis will also discuss the commentary on acceptable and unacceptable male and female behavior that is present in both works.

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Introduction

The epistolary form has been present in literature for the past few centuries, and it has often been associated with women writers as it began with the published correspondence of real-life women. Though this genre was considered to be appropriate for women, it was initially unusual for a female author to publish under her own name. Because prevailing ideas about women held that "to be virtuous was to be modest, self-effacing, and…..most certainly not published," publishing a woman's correspondence "was in some way to violate her personal integrity" (Goldsmith vii). As a result of these ideas, collections of letters were published anonymously. Hence, "[p]ublished epistolary writing by women was therefore rarely signed, and was often in fact produced by male writers 'imitating' the way women wrote" (Goldsmith vii). Additionally, ever since the letter was first considered to be a form of literature, "male commentators have noted that the epistolary genre seemed particularly suited to the female voice" (Goldsmith vii). In this manner, the collections of letters that were published progressed from being authentic to invented, and male writers of fiction appropriated for themselves a genre that had once belonged to women writers. These collections of letters quickly became popular, and soon collections of fictional correspondences began to be published alongside collections of authentic letters. During the seventeenth century, there was a "fascination with female epistolary voices;" this "made it inevitable that male authors would begin to use letters by women more often in their own writings" (Goldsmith 55). Because publishers recognized "the easy marketability of a woman's private correspondence,…..[b]y the eighteenth century the practice of male authors appropriating a female voice in their fictions had become a popular and innovative narrative ploy" (Goldsmith vii). Moreover, "[p]ublished epistolary writing…..was often produced by male writers 'imitating' the way women wrote" (Goldsmith vii). This genre

"peaked in eighteenth-century Europe" with works by authors such as Montesquieu, Richardson, Rousseau, Smollett, Goethe, and Laclos (Altman 3). The influence of the works of these authors is apparent in epistolary fiction by female authors that appeared as the century progressed.

Female authors began to reclaim this genre during the eighteenth century. By that time, "novel, letter, and letter-novel became feminized literary forms" (Beebee 118). Additionally, "novel writing allowed women to turn their life and experience into literature," and as the novel was still a developing form of art, "women's attention to the domestic and personal helped shape the novel" (Simonton 103). During the eighteenth century, "the popularity of the letter novel form was at its height" (Goldsmith vii). This form of writing was "a literary testing ground;" furthermore, "virtually all female novelists explored the epistolary novel" (Simonton 104). The epistolary novel became quite popular in German-speaking areas following the publication of *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* in 1771. Women authors in these lands "became particularly attracted to the letter form near the end of the eighteenth century," and they "consistently used letter fiction in order to create their vision of a public sphere" (Beebee 128). These aspects of the history of the epistolary novel help to explain why authors from the German and British literary tradition, such as Samuel Richardson, Sophie von La Roche, and Frances Burney, all chose to use that form. They also illustrate the transition from anonymous, authentic collections of letters by women to fictional collections of letters by male authors impersonating women back to fictional collections of letters by female authors.

Both Burney and La Roche incorporated certain aspects of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, which was published from 1747 – 1748 and became one of the most popular epistolary novels in the eighteenth century, in their first novels. Each drew on themes regarding male

behavior and women's responses to that behavior that are present in Richardson's work. However, the violent acts that male characters commit become tamer in Burney's and La Roche's novels, and the consequences that female characters experience as a result of these events become less severe. Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and La Roche's *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) comment on a number of issues facing women in the mid- to late-eighteenth century, especially problems pertaining to love and marriage. To a certain degree, these novels follow similar plot lines; however, the differences between these works suggest that Burney and La Roche had slightly divergent philosophies regarding options for young, unmarried women. Regardless of the disparities in plot, the similarities between some of the characters in these novels suggest that both Burney and La Roche had a shared vision as to how people ought to behave in the eighteenth century.

The first of these novels, *Clarissa*, was written by Samuel Richardson and published from 1747 to 1748. This novel consists of a series of letters, many of which spring from the pen of Clarissa Harlowe, the protagonist, as well as Anna Howe, her friend; there is also a sizeable exchange of letters between Lovelace and John Belford, his confidante. Conflict arises when Clarissa's brother convinces their father that a love affair exists between her and Lovelace. Clarissa's family thinks that she should marry Roger Solmes for financial reasons; however, she runs away with Lovelace. Lovelace comes to believe that she will marry him after she has lost her virginity to him, so he drugs her and rapes her after his other attempts to deflower her fail. Clarissa escapes from him following this traumatic event; she then becomes ill and dies. Lovelace later dies in a duel with one of Clarissa's relatives.

Sophie von La Roche's novel *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* comes after *Clarissa* chronologically speaking; this work is also an epistolary novel and was published in

1771. Fräulein Sophie von Sternheim writes the majority of the letters in this novel; there are also some letters by other characters. Rosine, Emilia's sister and Sophie's companion, narrates the beginning of the novel as well as a couple short passages later in the text. The novel opens with the history of Sophie's parents, the Oberste von Sternheim and Sophie P.; they ignore class differences and marry for love. Their marriage is happy until Frau von Sternheim dies; the Oberste raises Fräulein Sophie from then until his death, which occurs when she is nineteen. At that point, her aunt (Charlotte) becomes her guardian and attempts to groom her to live as the prince's mistress. While Fräulein Sophie is under Charlotte's guardianship, Lord Seymour and Lord Derby both fall in love with her; however, Derby's affection for her becomes dangerously passionate. After the ball at which Charlotte's disreputable intentions for Fräulein Sophie become public, Derby kidnaps Fräulein Sophie. When he realizes that she will not give herself to him, he rapes her. Although Fräulein Sophie becomes ill following this incident, she recovers from her illness and teaches young girls useful skills; she ultimately marries Lord Seymour.

La Roche was "the first recognized and acclaimed woman novelist in Germany" (Blackwell 149). Her novel *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* was "the first epistolary novel in German, and, according to some critics, the first German novel of Sentimentality" (Blackwell 150). La Roche's novel is significant in another aspect. Her work "is the first published novel in the German language by a German woman writer" (Lynn vii). Additionally, the success of this novel gave her "a kind of status and prestige in the world of German letters to which no French or English woman novelist of the eighteenth century would have dreamed of aspiring in her own culture" (Lynn vii). Despite experiencing such incredible success, La Roche and her accomplishments did little to further the cause of other German women writers. She "not only created a space for women's fiction; she also indirectly contributed to the confinement of

women authors to [the domestic] sphere throughout much of the nineteenth century" (Blackwell 151). La Roche's novels became increasingly more conservative over time.

La Roche implemented some of the strategies that authors such as Richardson had used, but she altered these strategies to fit her literary needs. Although La Roche's work is "neither cumbersome nor overloaded with subplots," she did utilize "many traditional epistolary techniques perfected by her predecessors" (Winkle 81). To some, her novel seemed to take these techniques a step farther. La Roche "had succeeded in developing an emotionally and psychologically expressive prose to rival, and even excel the nuanced intensity and subjective immediacy of Richardson and Rousseau, the two great foreign masters and models of the sentimental idiom" (Lynn vii). Both of these authors influenced *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* to some extent. One of the "most important philosophical influence[s] reflected in *Sternheim* is that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau," whose ideals "concerning the right way to educate children…..and…..concept of the superiority of nature over civilization…..are all echoed in La Roche's work" (Britt 9). Additionally, "La Roche generally agreed with most of his premises" regarding education (Britt 10). Whereas Rousseau's influence was important regarding the philosophy informing the novel, Richardson's influence was instrumental to its structure. Authors in La Roche's time "no longer looked to France but to England for literary inspiration" (Britt 13). La Roche and Christoph Martin Wieland, her editor and former love interest, "read Richardson, Young, Sterne, Geßner, and Klopstock; and their discussions became an important formative element in her intellectual development" (Britt 5). Richardson's influence is evident in the form of *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. It is highly likely "that for the epistolary form, the structure, the characterization, and major plot elements used in her work she looked to Samuel Richardson for inspiration" (Britt 16). His novel *Clarissa* and her novel *Die*

Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim were "two highly successful epistolary novels of the sentimental style" (Umbach 2).

Moreover, Anglophilia played an important role in La Roche's writing. *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* exhibits the influence of British literature on German authors "in that it is directly modelled on Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747-8) and that the theme of Englishness constitutes one of the driving forces of the plot" (Umbach 1). La Roche utilized the epistolary style that Richardson developed, but she altered this format by utilizing letters that are mostly from Sophie von Sternheim as well as a few from Lord Seymour, Lord Derby, and other characters. In contrast, Richardson's novel included correspondences between the characters – Anna Howe's responses to Clarissa's letters are often included, as are John Belford's responses to Lovelace's letters. This allows La Roche's narrative to be quite a bit more compact than Richardson's as there are fewer correspondents as well as fewer perspectives on the actions that are reported in the letters. Although La Roche drew on the style and structure of Richardson's work, she made some changes in content as well as form. La Roche "diverged from her literary antecedent in important points, above all in her treatment of morality and the importance attached to education and didactic aims" (Umbach 2). Rather than having her heroine die tragically, La Roche has Sophie overcome her traumatic experience and become involved in the education of young women; she also has Sophie marry Lord Seymour and experience an idyllic ending.

Sophie von La Roche was some twenty-two years older than Fanny Burney. La Roche "was born on 6 December, 1730 in the small imperial town of Kaufbeuren in the border area between Swabia and Bavaria, the eldest of thirteen children" (Lynn viii). Additionally, she was an intelligent and precocious child. La Roche "claims to have been able to distinguish the titles

of her father's books by the age of two, to have been reading at three, and to have read the Bible through by the time she reached five" (Lynn viii). Although she had "keen intelligence and intellectual motivation, her father…..did not allow her to engage in serious studies" (Blackwell 149). He expected her "to perfect herself in traditional female accomplishments: French, dancing, sewing and cooking, painting, and music" (Blackwell 150).

Finally, the epistolary novel *Evelina*, by Fanny Burney, was published in 1778. Most of the letters in this novel are those of Evelina Anville; there are also some by other characters, including one pivotal letter by Caroline Evelyn as well as a few by Lady Howard and Mr. Villars. This novel also starts with a description of the protagonist's ancestry; however, the relationship between Sir John Belmont and Caroline Evelyn, Evelina's parents, is far from happy. Sir John denies the existence of a marriage, and Caroline dies in childbirth, so Evelina is effectively orphaned at a very young age. Mr. Villars, Evelina's guardian, allows her to travel to London with Mrs. Mirvan and Miss Mirvan. While they are there, Evelina attracts the attentions of Lord Orville and Sir Clement Willoughby. Sir Clement Willoughby's feelings for Evelina are also a bit too passionate for comfort, but he only causes her to experience mental anguish via a forged letter. Eventually, Sir John claims Evelina as his daughter when he realizes that she must be the product of his union with Caroline Evelyn. As a result, Evelina is able to marry Lord Orville as a baronet's daughter and heiress rather than an illegitimate child.

Burney's novel arose from the remnants of a story that she had written some years previously. As a young girl, she wrote the tale "*The History of Caroline Evelyn*, whose heroine was the unfortunate mother of Evelina," and at the age of fifteen, she burned this story in addition to many of her other writings because she feared that this activity was beneath her (Bloom viii). There were social stigmas attached to creative writing as a woman's hobby. At this

time, “letter writing was approved of, but private journals and fictions were not deemed suitable for young women of imagination but without an inheritance, who might otherwise become distracted from…..find[ing] a socially acceptable and wealthy husband” (Chisholm 11). Although Burney’s hobby was unsuitable, there had been some successful women writers by her time. Prior to the publication of *Evelina*, “the pantheon of women writers to be accorded public approval…..did include a small number who wrote fiction” (Jones 114). However, “none of the publicly celebrated female writers wrote only novels; nor were they necessarily best known for their fiction” (Jones 114). Burney differed from these authors in a couple of aspects. She “was somewhat unusual, if not exceptional, in her ambition to write in every genre of imaginative literature” especially since “only 54 per cent of the women who wrote novels also wrote in another imaginative form” (Thaddeus 13). Unlike the majority of women writers in the eighteenth century, Burney rarely wrote non-fiction. Although she kept a journal, she “chose to avoid non-fiction, possibly because this was her father’s bailiwick” (Thaddeus 13).

Despite having such ambivalent feelings about composing stories, Burney did not quit writing. Burney’s “habit of writing…..and the secretive solicitude it required became such pleasures to [her] that she resented other calls on her time” (Harman 61). Furthermore, Burney continued to dwell on the story of Caroline Evelyn. Although the manuscript was gone, Burney could not banish the story from her mind. She later wrote “that much of the story had been ‘pent up’ in her head since the time of the composition of ‘Caroline Evelyn’” (Harman 85). Additionally, “the sequel to the novel she had burned…..continued to develop in her imagination,” and Burney declared that “before [she] had written a word…..she knew by heart the novel that was to become *Evelina*” (Thaddeus 10). As a result, many of the characters in *The History of Caroline Evelyn* were later included in *Evelina*. The earlier tale “featured several

characters who reappear in the daughter novel: Lady Howard, Mr. Villars, Miss Mirvan, Sir John Belmont and Madame Duval" (Harman 85).

Like *Clarissa* and *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, *Evelina* is an epistolary novel. Although Burney imitates Richardson's style to some extent, she also makes some innovations. She was "an economical epistolary writer; where Richardson, in *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, multiplied points of view and detailed incidents from several angles, she include[d] only letters that forward the plot" (Spencer 27). In this aspect, the style of Burney's work bears some resemblance to that of La Roche. Less than four hundred pages each, both *Evelina* and *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* are relatively succinct in comparison to *Clarissa*, which is well over a thousand pages long. Burney and La Roche also do not include both sides of the correspondences that constitute their narratives. Although Rosine narrates part of *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, neither her letters nor the letters of Emilia, her sister and the addressee of Sophie's letters, are present in the novel. Sophie writes many letters to Emilia, but her responses are never included, so there is no space devoted to Emilia's perspective on Sophie's situation. Similarly, many of Evelina's letters are addressed to Miss Mirvan, but Miss Mirvan's responses are completely absent from the novel. Furthermore, *Evelina* is in some ways even more focused on its eponymous narrator than *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* because Evelina writes so many of the letters. While Lord Derby and Lord Seymour write a fair amount of the letters in *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, none of the letters in *Evelina* are by Lord Orville, and the only letter by Sir Clement Willoughby makes an appearance as a portion of one of Evelina's letters rather than as an independent epistle. However, there are several letters in *Evelina* by Lady Howard and Mr. Villars. Some of these

serve a similar purpose to Rosine's narrative – their content explains the history of Evelina's family up to the beginning of the novel.

Fanny Burney was the youngest of these three authors. Burney "was born on 13 June 1752 in the Norfolk river port of King's Lynn, the third child and second daughter of Charles Burney and his first wife Esther" (Chisholm 8). In contrast to La Roche, Burney was rather slow in regards to learning to read and write. Burney "began to talk and read much later than normal" (Thaddeus 9). By the age of eight, she "couldn't even make out the letters of the alphabet" (Harman 23). Despite these difficulties, "once she began to talk, she talked inventively" (Thaddeus 9). She was also quite imaginative and possessed an excellent memory. When she and her siblings were at play, "she displayed a marked talent for mimicry and spontaneous invention, repeating scenes they had seen together at the theatre" (Harman 23). Burney's "powers of recalling things, and of making up what she could not recall, were indeed very strong" (Harman 24). Her abilities did not escape her mother's observation. Even though Fanny did not learn to talk or read as quickly as her siblings, Esther Burney "had never worried about Burney's apparent slowness; evidently she had noticed how observant her daughter was" (Thaddeus 9). Burney's ability to observe and commit those observations to memory allowed her to excel at writing dialogues later in life. Her works illustrate that she had "an uncanny ability to hear and record the swarming individualities of human speech" (Thaddeus 17). Because Burney was not as precocious as her siblings, her education was left in part to her brother James. This did not make learning to read any easier for her since he "teased her by holding the book she was meant to be reading from upside-down" (Harman 23). Although two of Burney's sisters received some education in France, "Fanny never received any formal education, but instead taught herself French and Italian (just as her father had done) and kept firmly to a timetable of her own

devising" (Chisholm 10 – 11). Her brother James "had a couple years at the grammar school on the grounds of his gender" and "was signed up as Captain's Servant on board the *Princess Amelia*" at the age of ten (Harman 18, 20); her brother Charles studied at "Caius College, Cambridge," until he was expelled for stealing books from the library, and he studied at "King's College, Old Aberdeen," after that incident (Harman 87 – 88). The education that Burney and her sisters received differed from that which Sophie von La Roche received in one major aspect. Because Charles Burney was determined to demonstrate that his family had risen in the world, he "refused to have his daughters brought up as noticeable housewives" (Rizzo 137).

Part 1: Parents, Children, and Marriages

Despite the initial similarities between Evelina's and Sophie's family situations, there are a number of important differences between them, especially their relationships with their parents and their parents' relationships with one another. Whereas the relationship between Evelina's parents quickly becomes calamitous, the relationship between Sophie's parents is affectionate until the end. In *Evelina*, the relationship between Caroline Evelyn and Sir John Belmont devolves swiftly in part as a result of the lack of a solid, loving foundation. Caroline marries this man in order to escape from tyrannical treatment at the hands of her mother. When Caroline refuses to marry one of her stepfather's nephews, Madame Duval "treat[s] her with the grossest unkindness, and threaten[s] her with poverty and ruin," and as a result, Caroline "rashly, and without witness, consent[s] to a private marriage with Sir John Belmont" (Burney 15). Caroline's hasty action leads to a marriage that is doomed to fail, and the ill treatment that she receives at home only foreshadows her husband's outrageous conduct towards her. Over the eighteenth century, the age at which people married decreased, and this may have been a result of improvident marriages such as those between Caroline and Belmont. Even though this drop may have been related to "a loosening of the link between marriage and financial well-being," it is likely "that the fall in the age of marriage owed as much to the increase in improvident marriers as it did to an improvement in the economy" (Griffin 145). Caroline's decision to marry Sir John certainly is a shortsighted step. Sir John may have seemed to be the easiest way to escape from a stressful situation, but the novel warns its readers not to engage in such a marriage.

Additionally, Sir John's motivation for marrying Caroline is tied to monetary reasons. He evidently feels that her money will help him to sustain his lifestyle, so he marries her in anticipation of her generous dowry. He is "a profligate young man" and chooses to marry

Caroline because he believes that he will receive money from her parents upon their union (Burney 15). Sir John's reason for wishing to marry Caroline does no more to help their marriage to thrive than does her rationale for desiring to marry him. In reality, many marriages during the eighteenth century were still intended to unite wealth. At this time, "the Church upheld the view that marriage was of prime concern to the married couple themselves, to be based on a close social, sexual, and economic relationship" (Macfarlane 160). Additionally, "[w]omen were often bargaining tools between families to secure alliances, property, inheritance, and titles, and daughters played an important role in building up trade and estate networks" (Simonton 28). The consequence that Caroline experiences as a result of rejecting her role as a bargaining tool is the loss of her dowry. Furthermore, many people at this time married on the basis of the wealth they would have in the future rather than what they had at the time of the wedding. These people "based their decision [to marry] on an assessment of their resources, though that assessment did not follow hard and fast rules and might include a consideration of either the extent of their savings or their future earnings" (Griffin 144). Sir John seems to view Caroline's dowry as his future earnings, and he feels that he has little reason to remain with her when this money does not materialize. As he quickly learns, it is risky to marry a woman solely on the basis of her wealth (Macfarlane 162). Although there is nothing disagreeable about Caroline's character, Sir John behaves terribly towards her because he does not receive any of her wealth.

Although much of this situation is to blame on Sir John's rakish tendencies, the unfortunate state in which Caroline finds herself is also a result of her own hasty actions. Rather than choosing a wise, compassionate man as her husband, Caroline chooses a cruel-hearted, immature rake who leaves her in a position far more troublesome than that from which she escapes. When Sir John does not receive the money that he expects from her parents, he

"infamously burn[s] the marriage certificate, and denie[s] that they had ever been united," and Caroline dies after giving birth to Evelina (Burney 15). As Sir John's actions illustrate, he is much more similar to other eighteenth-century rakish characters such as Lovelace in *Clarissa*, Lord Derby in *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, and Sir Clement Willoughby in *Evelina*. All of these characters assert "masculine power [that] continues to rely on modes of privilege, aggression, and self-authorization that violate the moral, social, and legal dictates that constitute its own legitimacy" (Mackie 2). His actions send a message to unmarried women. His abuse and abandonment of his wife suggest that harsh, calamitous consequences exist for impetuous behavior, especially in regards to choosing a husband. Because Caroline is so miserable under her parents' roof and so desperate to get away rather than bear their mistreatment for an extended period of time, she heedlessly marries a man who only appears to be decent. Had she taken the time to consider his character more meticulously, she might have realized that he was a worse choice than enduring life with her parents. Caroline appears to have few options for forcing Sir John to acknowledge their marriage, but women in at least one area of the British Isles could sue for damages in similar situations. Burney does not give a specific date for when the action of the novel occurs, so it is not possible to know if the marriage between Caroline and Sir John took place before or after Hardwick's Marriage Act of 1753. According to this law, "a couple were not legally married unless banns had been called and the ceremony carried out in the parish church (or under special license)" (Leneman 39). However, "Scotland continued to recognise as legal, marriages for which there was only the word of the couple involved that they had mutually consented" (Leneman 39). In the right place and time, Caroline might have been left in a less devastating position, but she is either unaware of the options that an abandoned woman had or unable to sue Sir John for whatever reason. At the same time that

Burney's novel critiques Caroline's precarious family situation, she also cautions her female audience against behaving in the same way as Caroline in order to escape from it.

In contrast, the relationship between the Oberste von Sternheim and Sophie P. follows a far more cautious, traditional path. Instead of being a stressful, unhappy situation, Sophie's life at home is fairly pleasant, so she has no reason to rashly enter a relationship that could potentially harm her. Sophie, her mother, her sister (Charlotte), and her brother (Baron P.) live together "auf den schönen Gütern, die [Baron P.] sein Vater zurückgelassen, sehr glücklich" (La Roche 20). While it was important at that time for a young woman to find a suitable husband, Sophie is not so desperate to leave home because she is surrounded by a family that loves her rather than unkind, abusive parents. At this time, "[w]omen expected to marry, and to have and give respect, consideration, contentment, and affection…..Harmony was what they hoped for" (Simonton 35). Sophie P. has the same expectations as any other woman of the eighteenth century, and those are met in the Oberste. However, because she has adequate emotional support at home, she does not feel the need to marry the first man who appears to be worthy of her affection. As a result, her marriage to the Oberste is not based on violent, passionate emotions. Regarding passion in the context of marriage, couples generally "sought permanence in relationships and embraced a 'conjugal' love, while they mistrusted the flame of passion and saw romantic love as quick to burn out" (Simonton 34). There is certainly permanence in the relationship between Sophie P. and the Oberste since they remain happily united until her death.

Additionally, the Oberste demonstrates that he is an acceptable husband because his approach to securing Sophie's affections and becoming engaged to her is more traditional because he asks for her family's consent. He first discusses such matters with Baron P., who then explains to Sophie that the Oberste is in love with her. The Oberste tells Baron P.:"Ich fürchte

die Vorurteile nicht so sehr als eine vorgefaßte Neigung, die unsre liebe Sophie in ihrem Herzen nährt. Ich kenne den Gegenstand nicht, aber sie liebt, und liebt schon lange" (La Roche 26). Although he knows that Sophie is in love with him, he does not use this information to manipulate her; rather, his discussion of this matter with her brother illustrates that he has some sense of propriety since he proceeds so cautiously. While Sir John's conduct is rakish in nature, the Oberste behaves as a true gentleman would. His actions show that "mere birth does not convey any understanding, let alone any instantiation, of merit and honor; all that being born a gentleman can bestow is the empty fact of its occurrence" (Mackie 15). The Oberste is a gentleman, but his social status is lower than that of Sophie and her siblings. Despite his lower status, he is able to conduct himself in a manner that would be becoming to any man; hence, his behavior demonstrates that birth does not dictate conduct. The Oberste's worth is partially based in his ability to conduct himself well. He forms "his emotions, attachments, and conduct within the parameters of polite civility," and by doing so he has "a way to socially register and communicate personal virtue as benevolence, sense, taste, affection, and sensibility" (Mackie 7).

When the Baron confronts Sophie with this knowledge, her reaction suggests that she also strives to behave properly. She initially claims that her heart has no attachment but soon confesses: "daß der Oberste der einzige Mann auf Erden ist, dessen Gemahlin ich zu werden wünsche" (La Roche 27, 29). This illustrates how dramatically Sophie P. differs from Caroline Evelyn as Sophie would rather keep her emotions to herself than risk behaving in a manner that might not be acceptable to others. Additionally, Sophie's virtuous conduct is rewarded with a happy union with the Oberste von Sternheim. The narrator explains that "[n]iemand war glücklicher als Sternheim und seine Gemahlin, deren Fußstapfen von ihren Untertanen verehrt wurden" (La Roche 44 – 45). This ideal, blissful relationship contrasts starkly with the suffering

that Caroline experiences as a result of her hasty marriage. By depicting the union between Sophie P. and the Oberste von Sternheim in such positive terms, La Roche endorses relationships that cross class boundaries as long as the parties involved behave rationally and decorously. At this time, young women "married men who were close in proximity, from mutual trade or work backgrounds or the same community and who shared many of the same cultural expectations" (Simonton 29). Furthermore, "women played an active part in courtship rituals and deciding who to marry;" they "were relatively free to choose, while love and affection were recognised considerations" (Simonton 29).

As a result of the differences in the relationships between the parents, there are also differences in the relationships that Evelina Anville and Sophie von Sternheim have with their parents. Because Caroline dies in childbirth, Evelina does not have a relationship with her, but her resemblance to Caroline is remarkable. Evelina is "the lovely resemblance of her lovely mother" (Burney 132). While this sort of connection differs from the typical tie between a mother and her daughter, it is nonetheless helpful to Evelina later in the novel. Although Evelina never personally knows Caroline, "the mother shape[s] the daughter's identity from the grave, achieving a privileged relationship to family and words that enables her to designate kinship positions" (Greenfield 42). Evelina's personality is also similar to that of Caroline Evelyn. Lady Howard remarks that Evelina "has the same gentleness in her manners, the same natural grace in her motions, that [she] formerly so much admired in her mother" (Burney 21). This resemblance allows for an even greater connection between Evelina and Caroline even though Caroline does not live to see her daughter grow up.

Evelina has some filial connections to France on the maternal side of her family. Mr. Evelyn marries Madame Duval (whose maiden name is not given) and ends up in France as a

result of this ill-fated union. His unfortunate marriage to this most obnoxious woman causes him "to abandon his native land, and fix his abode in France," where Caroline Evelyn is born (Burney 13 – 14). Caroline is raised in England under the care of Mr. Villars and his wife, but Madame Duval (who remarries following the death of Mr. Evelyn) summons her back to France, and at that point the quality of her life begins to decrease (Burney 14 – 15). Although Evelina's connection to France does not appear to have an impact on her character, certain aspects of Madame Duval's disposition are connected to common beliefs about France and French people from this time period. As an anonymous source suggests, English people viewed the French as "thoughtless, playful, scatterbrained, high spirited almost to extravagance, passionate to the point of madness" (qtd. in Hopes 117). Madame Duval exhibits many of these traits, especially thoughtlessness, but fortunately they are of little importance to Evelina's character. Her behavior may seem slightly odd to other characters at times, but this is more owing to her sheltered upbringing than her heritage.

Furthermore, Evelina's relationship with her father is fairly limited because he refuses to have anything to do with her until she is an adult, so Mr. Villars raises her. He believes that Polly Green, the young lady whom he raised, is Caroline's child (Burney 374 – 75). When he finally agrees to see her, her resemblance to Caroline shocks him so much that he states that "she has set [his] brain on fire, and [he] can see her no more" (Burney 373). Evelina's incredible resemblance to her mother is quite advantageous in this situation. Sir John has believed that the daughter of Evelina's nurse was actually his daughter for the past seventeen years even though this girl "bore no resemblance of either of her parents" (Burney 373 – 74). When he comes to terms with this mistake, he attempts to rectify his previous errors. Sir John and Mrs Selwyn decide "that the most eligible scheme for all parties, would be to have both the real and the fictitious daughter

married without delay" and that "all settlements, and so forth, will be made for [Evelina] in the name of Evelina Belmont" (Burney 377 – 78). Evelina's strong resemblance to her mother allows these changes to take place. Because of "her uncanny resemblance to her mother…..Evelina is able to correct the injustices perpetrated against both of them" (Greenfield 42).

Although Evelina's relationship with her parents is fairly scant, she does have a close relationship with her guardian, Mr. Villars. Mr. Villars was Mr. Evelyn's tutor; he later became Caroline Evelyn's guardian, and following Caroline's death, he raised Evelina and kept her hidden from both Sir John and Madame Duval (Burney 13 – 15). His decision to raise her in seclusion has protected her well from the dangers and temptations of the outside world, but he has also impeded her from learning certain manners that are necessary for dealing with society and from being recognized as Sir John's daughter and heiress. Although Evelina has a sweet, sensible temperament, she is rather unrefined in some respects. It is considered uncouth when Evelina laughs in public because "according to the rules of common civility, laughter is dangerous for either sex to indulge in publicly at someone else's expense" (Hamilton 428). However, Evelina learns more about appropriate behavior in such situations as the novel progresses. She receives a "gradual education in civility" (Hamilton 430). Although conducting oneself inappropriately in public is an issue, this consequence of Evelina's secluded childhood is not nearly as much of a problem as is the manner in which she was concealed from Sir John. Villars states that he is "very desirous of guarding her from curiosity and impertinence, by concealing her name, family, and story" (Burney 19). After it is revealed that the young lady that Sir John believes is his daughter is actually the wet nurse's, "it becomes clear that Villars's censorship supported the misrepresentation and actually interfered with Evelina's claims to a

respectable heritage" (Greenfield 41). Regardless of how detrimental Villars's protection is to Evelina's status in society, his motivation for safeguarding her in this way is well-meaning. He conceals Evelina because prior to her birth, Caroline "earnestly besought [him], that if her infant was a female, [he] would not abandon her to the direction of a man so wholly unfit for her education" (Burney 126). He respects Caroline's wishes even though they disregard custody laws that were in place in the eighteenth century. Sir John is technically the only person who "has the authority to determine [Evelina's] guardianship" as his "powers of custody" are absolute (Greenfield 47). Mr. Villars chooses to ignore such custody laws in order to protect the granddaughter of his former student. This ultimately complicates matters for Evelina; however, Mr. Villars means no harm by sheltering her in such a manner.

In contrast, Sophie von Sternheim has a loving relationship with her parents. Although Sophie's mother dies while Sophie is still a child, she is old enough to have experienced a relationship with her mother. The Oberste's "Gemahlin hatte ihm eine Tochter gegeben, welche sehr artig heranwuchs und von ihren neunten Jahr an (da Sternheim das Unglück hatte, ihre Mutter in einem Wochenbette zugleich mit dem neugebornen Sohne zu verlieren) der Trost ihres Vaters und seine einziges Freude auf Erden war" (La Roche 50). At the age of nine, Sophie is old enough to have formed some lasting memories of her mother and to have a connection with her that is based on more than only her appearance. However, Sophie bears a resemblance to her mother in both looks and personality. Sophie's grandmother states: "Sophie, die Sanftmut, die Güte deiner Mutter, ist ganz in deiner Seele!" (La Roche 56). Additionally, Sophie wears her mother's clothes until she goes to live with her aunt because "[ihr] teurer Papa [sie] immer in den Kleidern [ihrer] Mama sehen wollte, und…..[sie] sie auch am liebsten trug " (La Roche 63). Sophie's similarity to her mother is not quite as marked as Evelina's similarity to Caroline, but

such an imprint still exists. Like Evelina, Sophie has a maternal connection to a country outside of her homeland. Sophie's "Großmutter war eine Watson und Gemahlin des Baron P., welcher mit der Gesandtschaft in England war" (La Roche 74). The impact that Sophie's English heritage has on her personality is related to assumptions about English people that were common in the eighteenth century. At this time, English people were believed to possess a "combination of melancholy and passion, of introspection, monomania, and ferocity" (Hopes 113). Sophie's letters often demonstrate her capacity for introspection, and her desire to educate girls and young women later in the novel shows that she can become passionately involved in a cause.

Like Evelina, Sophie has inherited much of her mother's personality; however, some of the Oberste's traits are also present in Sophie's personality. Sophie's grandmother also remarks: "[d]u hast den Geist deines Vaters" (La Roche 56). The comments regarding Sophie's personality "suggest that the protagonist seems posed to transgress cultural as well as gender boundaries (Hyner 186). The union of English and German traits within Sophie gives her such an excellent personality because there is a balance between these properties; she seems to have inherited the best of both worlds. Sophie also has a great interest in England; in her mind, "[ü]brigens war zu allem, was engländisch hieß, ein vorzüglicher Hang in ihrer Seele, und ihr einziger Wunsch war, daß ihr Herr Vater einmal eine Reise dahin machen, und sie den Verwandten ihrer Großmutter zeigen möchte" (La Roche 52).

Sophie's relationship with her father is also much closer than the relationship that Evelina has with Sir John; in some ways, their relationship is more similar to that which Evelina has with Mr. Villars. The Oberste lives until Sophie is nineteen years old, and this is enough time for him to provide her with some education even though he does not live long enough to see her safely married to a worthy man.

Part 2: Rakes: Lovelace, Derby, and Willoughby

Although expectations of how men should act evolved throughout the eighteenth century, certain antiquated modes of behavior persisted and are depicted in *Clarissa*, *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, and *Evelina*. While men were expected to behave decently, some still chose to act as rakes rather than as gentlemen. These men seemed to feel that "without some signs of assertive, successful (hetero)sexuality, the expression of masculinity remain[ed] incomplete: the gentleman might be taken for a fop, or worse" (Mackie 9). In their eyes, "[t]he claims of aristocratic masculinity [were] made most insistently and conventionally by the prestige secured through sexual prowess" (Mackie 10). Lovelace, Lord Derby, and Sir Clement Willoughby all demonstrate such behaviors. Lovelace's violent, misogynistic actions suggest that he is the most deluded of this trio of rakes. Derby is not far behind, and Willoughby, though aggressive and obnoxious, is the least dangerous of the three. The sexual violence and rakish behavior present in *Evelina* is not nearly as damaging as that in *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*; however, the existence of these motifs in both novels suggests that Richardson's *Clarissa* may have influenced both Burney and La Roche.

In *Clarissa*, Lovelace ultimately rapes Clarissa Harlowe because he believes that she will finally consent to marry him once he has harmed her and her virtue in this manner. Lovelace writes: "the rage of love, the rage of revenge is upon me! By turns they tear me! – The progress already made! – the woman's instigations! – the power I shall have to try her the utmost, and still to marry her if she be not to be brought to cohabitation" (Richardson 882). This demonstrates that regardless of whether Clarissa loves him or wants to have an intimate relationship with him, he will force himself upon her with the misguided belief that she will be more willing to marry him once she has lost her virginity to him. Lovelace's blatant description of the passionate

feelings that consume him also suggests that he lacks the sort of rationality that would cause him to realize that rape will not win over any girl, even one who wanted to marry him at one time. As a rakish man, Lovelace "performs his outrages to claim a kind of fully approved license already becoming outdated by the later seventeenth century," and he is "all the more romantic for his association with the milieu of elite Restoration culture" (Mackie 12). Perhaps there is something romantic about his connection to bygone days, but there is nothing attractive about his appalling behavior, especially given that it destroys Clarissa. His conduct is especially offensive in comparison to the conduct of Lord Seymour and Lord Orville, who both act in a manner that was considered to be far more acceptable for a gentleman by the middle of the eighteenth century.

Furthermore, the roiling conflict between love and revenge in Lovelace's heart hints that he does not have enough self-discipline to keep his actions, as well as his feelings, under control. Lovelace finally commits this terrible act despite Clarissa's pleas for mercy. She writes:

> I remember I pleaded for mercy – I remember that I said *I would be his – indeed I would be his* – to obtain his mercy – But no mercy found I! – My strength, my intellects, failed me! – And then such scenes followed – Oh my dear, such dreadful scenes! – fits upon fits (faintly indeed, and imperfectly remembered) procuring me no great compassion – but death was withheld from me. That would have been too great a mercy!
>
> Thus was I tricked and deluded back by blacker hearts of my own sex, than I thought there were in the world; who appeared to me to be persons of honour: and, when in his power, thus barbarously was I treated by this villainous man! (Richardson 1011)

The reader is left to imagine the horrors that Clarissa experienced at the hands of Lovelace and his female accomplices. Lovelace admires Clarissa greatly; however, his violent emotions and unbridled passions overcome whatever respect he had for her character that might have prevented him from treating her so cruelly, and he ravishes her even though she finally consents to marry him. His passionate feelings contrast greatly with the emotions that were considered to be more suited for the relationship between a husband and wife during the eighteenth century. At

that time, "a rather more peaceful, and certainly not turbulent, passionate atmosphere had to be achieved in love and marriage" (Luhmann 148). Lovelace's actions are beyond turbulent – they are violent and inconsiderate. Furthermore, Clarissa's description of Lovelace in this passage shows that his passions have corrupted his personality. He now lacks compassion, and he is barbarous as well as villainous. Lovelace's actions, as well as the fantasies that he depicts in other letters, show "the indelibly delinquent, even sadistic hue of [his] character" (Mackie 65). He is quite capable of presenting himself to the world in a manner that is becoming to a gentleman, but the crimes that he commits behind closed doors demonstrate that there is nothing worthwhile about his personality.

Additionally, the end that Clarissa meets is far more tragic than those which Fräulein Sophie and Evelina experience. Clarissa is so traumatized by Lovelace's ill treatment of her that she becomes increasingly ill. Belford writes: "while I was in discourse with Mrs Smith and Mrs Lovick, the doctor and the apothecary both came in together. They confirmed to me my fears as to the dangerous way she is in…..Her heart's broke; she'll die, said [the doctor]" (Richardson 1248). This illustrates that the effects of Lovelace's behavior towards her are psychological as well as physical and that the repercussions of his cruelty are long lasting.

Even though Clarissa is away from the source of much of her anguish, it is exceedingly difficult for her to deal with the traumas of being held captive and raped. Because these events cause her so much distress, she develops an unnamed ailment. Clarissa does not recover from her illness, and she dies tragically but peacefully. In a letter that she leaves for her uncles, she writes:

> When these lines reach your hands, your late unhappy niece will have known the end of all her troubles; and as she humbly hopes, will be rejoicing in the mercies of a gracious God who has declared that He will forgive the truly penitent of heart.
>
> I write, therefore, my dear uncles, and to you both in one letter (since your fraternal love has made you both but as one person), to give you comfort, and not

> distress; for however sharp my afflictions have been, they have been but of short duration; and I am betimes (happily as I hope) arrived at the end of a painful journey.
> (Richardson 1375)

Clarissa comes to terms with her fate when she realizes that she will not recover from her ailment; however, that does not diminish the tragedy of her death at such a young age. The sentiments that she expresses in this letter hearken back to the emotions that she felt when Lovelace assaulted her. At that time, she wished for death; that wish has been fulfilled by the time the reader encounters this letter. Lovelace attempts "to undertake reparation for rape through marriage;" however, Clarissa "refuses this compensation [and]…..dies in a manner that places the blame fully at Lovelace's feet" (Mackie 69). As a result, he is guilty of causing her death in addition to raping her. Lovelace is assigned "full guilt for it, according to a body of law on dueling," which asserted that " 'the perpetrator was guilty of murder *whether he intended to harm the victim or not*' " (Mackie 69). Lovelace wishes to coerce Clarissa into becoming his wife, but this plan backfires on him. His narcissism is at the heart of Clarissa's tragic death as he is so deluded that he believes that a woman whom he rapes will want to marry him afterwards.

Although a similar plot occurs in *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, Fräulein Sophie recovers from the trauma well enough that she is able to contribute to the community. However, Lord Derby's treatment of her is not quite as horrible as he neither drugs her nor enlists the assistance of a group of prostitutes as well as her own lady's maid in order to deflower her. Long before Derby takes Fräulein Sophie away from her terrible aunt, whose intentions for her are no better than his own, his all-consuming passion for her becomes apparent. He writes: „Der Morgen kam und fand mich wie einen tollen brennenden Narren mit offner Brust und verstörten Gesichtszügen am Fenster. Der Spiegel zeigte mich mir unter einer Satansgestalt, die fähig gewesen wäre, das gute furchtsame Mädchen auf immer vor mir zu verscheuchen" (La

Roche 121 – 22). Derby's description of his appearance in the mirror indicates that he even realizes that this passion is unhealthy on some level. The satan-like figure that he sees in himself indicates that he knows that he should control his feelings rather than allowing them to guide his actions; however, he is just as unable to control himself as Lovelace. As a result, Derby's desires become too great for him to resist the temptation of taking some drastic, violent measure in order to possess Fräulein Sophie. By succumbing to such desires, Derby unleashes his inner rake. During the eighteenth century, "any too overt and extravagant expression of sexual profligacy, at least among the genteel, [stood] at odds with the strictures of self-restraint, moral conformity, politeness, and decency: the gentleman risk[ed] devolving into the libertine rake" (Mackie 8 – 9). Although Derby has only expressed his desires on paper so far, the imagery present in this excerpt suggests that the devilish part of his character will play a dominant role in his actions in the future.

After Derby removes Fräulein Sophie from her distressing situation at court, he expects to receive more pleasure from this relationship than only her company. However, Fräulein Sophie refuses to sleep with him because they are not married, and he finally loses his patience with her one morning while she is being dressed. He writes:

> Schamröte überzog ihr ganzes Gesicht; aber sie versagte mir meine Bitte geradezu; ich drang in sie, und sie sträubte sich so lange, bis Ungeduld und Begierde mir eingaben ihre Kleidung vom Hals an durchzureißen, um auch wider ihren Willen zu meinem Endzweck zu gelangen. Solltest du glauben, wie sie sich bei einer in unsern Umständen so wenig bedeutenden Freiheit gebärdete? – »Mylord«, rief sie aus, »Sie zereißen mein Herz, und meine Liebe für sie; niemals werde ich Ihnen diesen Mangel feiner Empfindungen vergeben! O Gott, wie verblendet war ich!«
> (La Roche 222)

In contrast to Lovelace, Derby does not rely on drugs to achieve his goal, which might partially explain why Fräulein Sophie does not suffer as dire consequences as Clarissa. Derby personifies

the rake when he commits this terrible crime. He, like the stereotypical rake, is committed "to the exercise of personal will self-licensed as absolute authority" (Mackie 12). He certainly knows that this is not the proper or legal route to making Sophie his wife, but he forces his will upon her just to demonstrate his power over her. Fräulein Sophie's response to his cruelty towards her is similar in character to the distress that Clarissa expresses when Lovelace is on the verge of raping her; however, Fräulein Sophie comes to a couple of bold, clear conclusions rather than just begging for mercy or hoping for death. Like Clarissa, Fräulein Sophie realizes that she was in some way deceived into entering this relationship, but she only has Derby to blame for this deception. She is also more than willing to let him know that she cannot possibly forgive him for this act. Sophie's willingness to express her anger and shock rather than begging for mercy and consenting to do as her attacker desires also indicates that she has somewhat more inner strength than Clarissa.

Fräulein Sophie builds a new life following her traumatic experience rather than allowing that catastrophe to destroy her. Although she becomes ill as a result of emotional stress from this terrible event, she recovers and finds a new vocation. Rosina writes:

> aber am fünften Tage wurde sie krank, und zwölf Tage lang dachten wir nichts anders, als daß sie sterben würde. Sie schrieb auch einen kleinen Auszug ihres Verhängnisses, und ein Testament. Aber sie erholte sich wider ihr Wünschen.....daneben aber wollte sie Gutes tun, und einige arme Mädchen im Arbeiten unterrichten.
> (La Roche 233 – 34)

Fräulein Sophie expresses a wish to die similar to Clarissa's, but her physical strength overshadows her psychological state, and she survives her illness. She also chooses to live a productive life rather than completely hiding from the world or having an otherwise fruitless existence. By doing so, she demonstrates that a woman who has been raped can be redeemed

whereas Clarissa's tragic fate reflects the idea that a woman's reputation could not recover from such a blow.

Even though Sir Clement Willoughby's passionate feelings towards Evelina resemble the emotions that Lovelace and Lord Derby had for Clarissa and Fräulein Sophie, respectively, his actions towards Evelina are not nearly as harmful. They cause Evelina to fall ill but only because they cause her to become concerned as to whether Lord Orville, her suitor, is a good man. Willoughby expresses his love for Evelina via a note that he signs as Orville. He writes:

> Believe me, my lovely girl, I am truly sensible of the honour of your good opinion, and feel myself deeply penetrated with love and gratitude. The correspondence you have so sweetly commenced I shall be proud of continuing, and I hope the strong sense I have of the favour you do me, will prevent your withdrawing it. Assure yourself that I desire nothing more ardently, than to pour forth my thanks at your feet, and to offer those vows which are so justly the tribute of your charms and accomplishments.
> (Burney 256)

In comparison to the violent actions that Lovelace and Lord Derby commit, Willoughby's note is relatively tame, but Evelina only expects her suitor to behave decorously, so this note is quite upsetting to her. The contents of Willoughby's letter also show that he is just as passionate as Lovelace and Derby, albeit much better behaved. His use of the word "penetrated" suggests that his feelings are a bit deeper and less transient than those of the aforementioned lascivious lovers, and his expression of feelings of gratitude suggests that he might possess more maturity and self-control than the other two. It is possible that Willoughby filled this letter with lies since he wanted Evelina to believe that Orville wrote it, but there is likely some truth in Willoughby's words since he attempts to court Evelina. Like Lovelace and Derby, Willoughby's "criminal mode is primarily sexual and relies on the clichés of libertine erotic discourse" (Mackie 158). Willoughby's letter to Evelina certainly has sexual aspects. Rather than simply offering her his thanks, he states that he "desire[s] nothing more ardently, than to pour [his] thanks at [her] feet"

(256). The use of the words "desire" and "ardently" suggest that his feelings are passionate in nature, and the imagery that he utilizes in this statement has a dramatic flourish. In this manner, his writing is sexual and erotic as he expresses libidinous feelings for Evelina, who does not expect to hear such a declaration from any man, especially one who claims to be Lord Orville.

Additionally, Willoughby's decision to forge Orville's name on this note is a rakish act. Although this note does not cause immediate physical harm to Evelina, it still bears a resemblance to the crimes that Lovelace and Derby commit. The crimes of "rape, impersonation, and forgery…..are related as violations of the person, whether as body, as character, or as identity" (Mackie 68). The letter causes some harm to Orville's character in the eyes of Evelina and Mr. Villars, but it seems to cause far greater damage to Evelina's emotional and physical well-being than to Orville's good name for at least a short time. Even though this forgery is a minor event in comparison to the traumas that Clarissa and Sophie experience, the emotional distress that Evelina feels as a result of this letter causes her to fall ill. She writes: "I have been very ill, and Mr. Villars was so much alarmed, that he not only insisted upon my accompanying Mrs. Selwyn hither, but earnestly desired she would hasten her intended journey" (268). This illustrates that Evelina is just as susceptible to the negative effects of psychological distress as Clarissa and Fräulein Sophie. Even though Willoughby's note did not physically harm her, the deceitful nature of the note did, and the idea that her noble suitor could write something so unrefined is so upsetting that she, too, falls victim to her own sensitivity. In this manner, she is a fairly typical protagonist of this time period.

Although the note itself is not an act of violence towards Evelina, Willoughby's behavior towards her when he retrieves it is certainly not civilized. His actions in this instance do not

upset her nearly as much as the note, but they bear a strong resemblance to the crimes that Lovelace and Derby commit. She writes:

> 'The letter,' cried he, gnashing his teeth, 'you shall never see more. You ought to have burnt it the moment you had read it!' And, in an instant, he tore it into a thousand pieces.
>
> Alarmed at a fury so indecently outrageous, I would have run out of the room; but he caught hold of my gown, and cried, 'Not yet, not yet must you go! I am but half-mad yet, and you must stay to finish your work. Tell me, therefore, does Orville know your fatal partiality? – Say *yes*,' added he, trembling with passion, 'and I will fly you for ever!'
>
> (Burney 357)

This instance of Willoughby's behavior demonstrates that his passion is just as dangerous as the violent emotions that Lovelace and Derby felt. Rather than just leaving Evelina alone once he has taken the letter from her, Willoughby tears up the letter in such a way that no one can possibly reassemble it and learn its contents and the identity of its author. He also verges on becoming physically violent towards her when he grabs her gown in order to restrain her. However, Willoughby has enough respect for Evelina and her relationship with Orville that he ultimately leaves her after destroying the evidence of his rather foolish act instead of doing anything to cause her physical harm or damage her reputation. His behavior is once again rakish; however, he does demonstrate some regard for the law by choosing to leave rather than assault Evelina. Typically, "the rake's masculinity asserts criminality as a status privilege; at the same time, it asserts the elite status of this criminal brand of masculinity" (Mackie 43). Willoughby's decision to sign a letter with Orville's name and then destroy it so violently later on suggests that he finds some pleasure in flouting the law: he first commits a forgery and then obstructs justice by tearing it to pieces. On the other hand, he shows some respect for the law (or at least for Evelina) by leaving her rather than acting on his passionate emotions. Moreover, Evelina realizes quite easily that Willoughby is an ill-behaved man. She "deduce[s] from previous encounters that

Sir Clement often falls short of true civility despite his propensity for lavishing extravagant compliments on her" (Hamilton 427). Although this encounter with Willoughby is surprising, it is not entirely unexpected because his behavior in the past has not been particularly exemplary.

Part 3: Gentlemen: Lord Seymour and Lord Orville

Whereas Lovelace, Lord Derby, and Sir Clement Willoughby are rakish men, Lord Seymour and Lord Orville are far nobler in character. These two characters are similar in a variety of ways and demonstrate mannerisms and characteristics that became increasingly more desirable during the eighteenth century. At that time, "[c]oncepts of masculinity…..were tied to revised notions of sexual difference and, among the elite and aspiring elite, to codes of politeness and sociability" (Mackie 2 – 3). These codes play into the comportment of Orville and Seymour. Additionally, "modern politeness maintained its adherence to conventional religious standards of sexual morality as well as to the discourses of prudent expenditure, understood both as sexual and economic output" (Mackie 11). Characters such as Lovelace, Derby, and Willoughby cling to older ideas of male behavior that are presented as *passé*; however, characters such as Seymour and Orville conduct themselves in ways that are a bit more progressive and mature. Even though the reader does not have the same access to Orville's thoughts that he or she has to Seymour's thoughts, the striking resemblance between these two characters suggests that regardless of whether La Roche's text influenced Burney's, these authors shared some thoughts as to how a man ought to behave towards women.

Sophie von Sternheim first encounters Lord Seymour and his uncle when she and her aunt go to visit the Princess of W., and she is quite happy to meet a man who possesses such excellent qualities. She writes:

> Wenn ich den Auftrag bekäme den Edelmut und die Menschenliebe, mit einem aufgeklärten Geist vereinigt, in einem Bilde vorzustellen, so nähme ich ganz allein die Person und Züge des Mylord Seymour; und alles, welche nur jemals eine Idee von diesen drei Eigenschaften hätten, würden jede ganz deutlich in seiner Bildung und in seinen Augen gezeichnet sein.
> (La Roche 70 – 71)

This description illustrates that Sophie regards Seymour quite highly since she feels that his personality contains three desirable traits – generosity, philanthropy, and an enlightened spirit. By bestowing such attributes upon Seymour, La Roche characterizes him as a gentleman rather than a rake. He demonstrates the characteristics that became more valuable as the eighteenth century wore on. During that century, "[p]ersonal worth gravitate[d] from the contingencies of wealth and status inward to an ethical-aesthetic realm variously manifest as taste, sensibility, and virtue" (Mackie 7). As an English lord, Seymour is certainly an affluent, prominent member of society, but his personal qualities greatly increase his value as a man in Sophie's eyes; his status as a nobleman is not nearly as important to her as his excellent character.

Furthermore, the caution that Lord Seymour demonstrates in how he associates with Sophie shows that he has some moral principles. Seymour's uncle encourages him to suppress his feelings for her because his uncle knows the fate that her aunt and uncle have in mind for her. Seymour writes:

> Aber was werden Sie mir dazu sagen, daß man dieses edle reizende Mädchen zu einer Mätresse des Fürsten bestimmt? daß mir Mylord verboten ihr meine Zärtlichkeit zu zeigen, weil der Graf F. ohnehin befürchtet, man werde Mühe mit ihr haben? Doch behauptet er, daß sie deswegen an den Hof geführt worden sei. Ich zeigte meinem Oncle alle Verachtung, die ich wegen dieser Idee auf den Grafen Löbau, ihren Oncle geworfen; ich wollte das Fräulein von dem abscheulichen Vorhaben benachrichtigen, und bat Mylord fußfällig, mir zu erlauben, durch meine Vermählung mit ihr, ihre Tugend, ihre Ehre, und ihre Annehmlichkeiten zu retten.....Mein Oheim erregte in mir die Begierde, den Fürsten gedemütigt zu sehen, und ich stellte mir den Widerstand der Tugend als ein entzückendes Schauspiel vor.
> (La Roche 92 – 93).

The shock that Seymour expresses at this ridiculous, shameful plan shows that he has an understanding of the proper way to treat a woman. Although he expresses some passionate feelings, his letter illustrates that he knows better than to act on them since he is willing to take his uncle's advice rather than do as he pleases. This differentiates him from Lord Derby as Derby

is ultimately unable to control himself and suppress his desires. Seymour exhibits behaviors that are consistent with newer ideas about conduct. Ideas regarding civility that arose in the eighteenth century "required from all 'gentlemen' a degree of consideration, respect, decency, and restraint at odds with the assertion of those extravagant forms of status-linked privilege…..performed by the rake" (Mackie 39). Seymour's letter shows that he thinks and acts as a gentleman ought to. Because the intentions of Sophie's aunt and uncle for Sophie's future are so upsetting to him, he must have some sense of propriety. Additionally, Seymour's desire to rescue Sophie from her unfortunate, shameful fate furthers the idea that he has an understanding of respectable behavior. Seymour's feelings also suggest that he is able to be considerate towards other people since he finds this plan for Sophie so vile. His decision to heed his uncle's advice rather than follow his heart demonstrates that he knows how to behave respectfully and with restraint; a person with a lesser comprehension of either of these qualities would not have behaved with such caution and deference.

However, the sentiments that Seymour asserts here show that he is not completely beyond some of the more old-fashioned aspects of male behavior. Although he does not express a wish to actively fight for Sophie's honor, his interest in seeing what happens as this drama plays out suggests that he has some interest in behaviors that were part of an older male ideal. Seymour does not participate in a duel in order to defend Sophie, but his interest in her well-being and in her fate at court shows that certain older values have persisted in the younger generation. The duel is "[r]ooted in the preservation of personal prestige…..[and] trumps all other sociopolitical institutions in the determination of honor" (Mackie 18). Sophie's possible fate as the prince's mistress has nothing to do with Seymour's prestige as he is not in a romantic relationship with her, but he is still appalled that her relatives would pawn her off in such a

manner. Because Seymour is a fairly rational person (and also because his admiration for Sophie is confined to his mind), he only wishes to see how Sophie's destiny plays out. In this respect, he demonstrates passivity in a manner similar to Lord Orville at times. Orville remains a passive bystander in one part of *Evelina* as a result of "the constraints on behavior imposed by politeness, along with the tensions between sexuality and status inherent in the ideal of gentlemanly civility" (Hamilton 435). Seymour also behaves within these constraints in regards to his feelings for Sophie. Even though he would like to deliver Sophie from her fate as the prince's mistress, he takes his uncle's advice and passively (yet anxiously) waits to see what occurs next.

Evelina's relationship with Lord Orville begins in an environment that is less formal as well as less threatening to her honor and virtue. She meets Lord Orville for the first time at a dance. She writes that a "gentleman, who seemed about six-and-twenty years old, gayly, but not foppishly, dressed, and indeed extremely handsome, with an air of mixed politeness and gallantry, desired to know if [she] was engaged" (Burney 29). Although Orville is quite fashionable and attractive, he is still well behaved. Through his actions, Orville fulfills the role of a gentleman. Rather than relying on dramatic displays of power, he "ensure[s] his own…..worth and honor through education and the personal cultivation of virtues and abilities," and he also "exercise[s] a greater self-restraint, depending not on violence…..to protect his honor and authority" (Mackie 6). Orville may be a member of the upper echelon of society, but he is still capable of conducting himself in a manner that is not snobbish, and he is not a fop even though he is stylish.

Additionally, Burney gives Orville a demeanor with characteristics that were desirable in male behavior beginning early in the eighteenth century. Evelina's description of him shows that he is an admirable, polite gentleman. She writes:

> The conversation of Lord Orville is really delightful. His manners are so elegant, so gentle, so unassuming, that they at once engage esteem, and diffuse complacence. Far from being indolently satisfied with his own accomplishments…..he is most assiduously attentive to please all who are in his company…..
> (Burney 72)

Orville's conduct and manners exhibit some of the properties that became a desirable part of male deportment in the eighteenth century. This illustrates that "[t]hrough Lord Orville, Burney endorses the system of polite behavior that flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century, but at the same time she reveals the system to be under stress, particularly with regard to the construction of masculinity" (Hamilton 417). Orville's behavior might be slightly old-fashioned for 1778, but his conduct is both more modern and more mature than Willoughby's. In the early eighteenth century, "[t]he notion that society needed a widespread reformation of male manners – particularly among the aristocracy – arose in part as a reaction against the corruption of Restoration court life and an aristocratic ideal of masculine honor that was deemed outmoded" (Hamilton 418). Rather than behaving violently or rudely to demonstrate his status, Orville treats everyone kindly. His civilized demeanor differentiates him from characters such as Lord Derby and Sir Clement Willoughby and puts him on much the same footing as Lord Seymour because he is considerate, respectful of others, and able to show restraint in his behavior and expression of his emotions.

Although Orville's behavior illustrates the positive aspects of the culture of politeness, his actions also hint at some of the consequences of this broad change in male behavior. Violent, "manly" activities such as dueling were no longer considered to be appropriate for men, so they

were left with fewer options for expressing their "manliness." Although people recognized that there was a need to reform men's behavior, "from the very beginning the impulse to reform male manners was fraught with anxiety about the reconstruction of masculinity along feminized lines" (Hamilton 432). There is something slightly feminine about Orville's gentle, elegant manners, but his manners help to differentiate him from the overly fashionable fop. His manners show another aspect in which Richardson's novels influenced Burney. A journal entry from November 1768 suggests that she was "surprised and a little put out at Seton's opinion that Samuel Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison is too perfect a character to have ever existed in real life," and she may have been "consciously valorizing the mores…..embodied by her beloved Sir Charles Grandison" in the character of Lord Orville (Hamilton 416, 425). This again suggests that Richardson's works had a great impact on Burney's writing. Although *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* was published several years before *Evelina*, it likely had little influence on Burney's work even if she read it since her early journals indicate that she began contemplating on matters that later became a part of *Evelina* for some time prior to the publication of *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*.

Lord Orville's genteel traits become even more evident in his conduct towards Evelina later in the novel. Even though she is of a lower social status than he is, he consistently behaves towards her with kindness and respect, and this demonstrates that he is truly a gentleman. She writes:

> The attention with which Lord Orville honours me is as uniform as it is flattering, and seems to result from a benevolence of heart that proves him as much a stranger to caprice as to pride; for, as his particular civilities arose from a generous resentment at seeing me neglected, so will they, I trust, continue as long as I shall, in any degree, deserve them…..When we walk out, he condescends to be my companion, and keeps by my side all the way we go. When we read, he marks the passages most worthy to be notices, draws out my sentiments, and favours me with his own.

(Burney 296).

Evelina's blossoming relationship with Orville insinuates that Burney, like La Roche, has a progressive view of marriages that cross class boundaries. Although the failed relationship between Evelina's parents also traversed the class divide, the major issue in their marriage pertained more to Sir John's greed than to Caroline's lower social status. As "[t]here were a number of scales upon which a prospective spouse was measured…..a very high score on one might offset other disadvantages" (Macfarlane 163). Evelina lacks fortune as well as status at this point, but her spectacular character more than compensates for those deficiencies. Furthermore, Evelina and Orville's relationship hints at some rather progressive thinking on Burney's part. The romance between Evelina and Orville "suggests that Burney was endorsing a form of meritocracy whereby a baronet's daughter could marry an earl in large part because her mastery of polite behavior attested to her inner virtue" (Hamilton 430). Even though Evelina's comportment is initially unpolished at times, she soon learns to act in a manner that pleases society but still demonstrates innocence, and this may be seen as an outward display of her outstanding, genteel character.

Although one aspect of Orville's behavior tended to preserve the class divide in practice, this particular facet of his comportment helps his relationship with Evelina to develop in the novel. One property of Orville's refinement "is his condescension, or willingness to treat people of lower status as equals" (Hamilton 425). His behavior towards Evelina in this passage demonstrates this trait. Most of the other people in his company ignore Evelina, but he pays attention to her regardless of her social status. Condescension "may have the effect of preserving the distance between persons of disparate rank," but "Orville's willingness to engage in conversation with social inferiors distinguishes him from his snobbish sister" and others of his

rank (Hamilton 426). Although this practice does not necessarily form connections between members of different social classes, Lord Orville seems to show genuine concern for Evelina. His conduct towards her is consistently kind, and he seems to feel the need to provide her with some sort of guidance. He also expresses an interest in her thoughts, which indicates that he is not particularly self-centered.

Conclusion

Even though no solid evidence exists to prove that Frances Burney read *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* and then based *Evelina* on this novel, it is still important to note the remarkable similarity between these texts and to consider why two highly similar novels were written in two different places so close together in time. It is possible that La Roche's work influenced Burney's since *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* was quite popular and an English translation of it was published in 1776 (Britt 3). However, given that calculus was invented around the same time by Sir Isaac Newton and Gottfried Leibniz, who were working independently of one another on different continents (Harding and Scott 3), it is certainly possible that Burney wrote *Evelina* without being influenced in any way by Sophie von La Roche's work. The history of *Evelina* suggests that Burney developed certain parts of this story some time before La Roche wrote and published *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. Some of the characters in these novels bear striking resemblances to one another, but there are a variety of differences in the connections between the characters. For example, Sophie von Sternheim's father willingly fulfills his role as a family man whereas Evelina Anville finds a father figure in Mr. Villars since her own father is an irresponsible, heartless rogue at the time of her birth. Additionally, Caroline Evelyn, who has little contact with her mother until she is an adult, is so miserable with her mother and stepfather when she finally lives with them that she chooses to elope with Sir John Belmont in order to escape from this situation. In contrast, Sophie P. feels no such need to elope with the Oberste von Sternheim because her life with her stepmother and half-siblings is much more pleasant. Some of the minor differences between the characters and their portrayal are also quite significant in regards to creating a division between the two novels. Whereas there is no question of Sophie von Sternheim's legitimacy, Sir John's

vengeful act of burning the marriage certificate casts a shadow of doubt on Caroline Evelyn's status as a married woman as well as Evelina's status as his legitimate daughter and heiress. Furthermore, the reader's knowledge of Lord Orville in *Evelina* is restricted to how Evelina describes him in her letters. By contrast, the reader is able to discover Lord Seymour's character through his letters as well as what other characters write about him in *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. Even though all of these differences are fairly small, they are significant enough cast doubt on the idea that La Roche's work may have influenced Burney's. Moreover, the struggles that both Caroline Evelyn and Evelina Anville experience diverge quite dramatically from those that Sophie von Sternheim suffer. This suggests that Burney was thinking about the issues affecting women in a completely different way, and that contrast in thought may be a result of the large difference in age between Burney and La Roche, dissimilarities in the cultures in which they came of age, or a combination of both factors.

It is also important to note the social issues that are present in both of these novels. Women had few options for how they would live as adults outside of marriage during the eighteenth century, and this problem plays an important role in the fate of Caroline Evelyn. Simply running away from home and living independently is not a viable option for her; the only way out of such a situation for most middle- and upper-class women was to marry. Sophie P. must also find a suitable husband; however, her relationship with the Oberste von Sternheim touches on the class divide rather than on a woman's need to find a husband. La Roche provides readers with a glowing portrayal of an interclass relationship in the romance and marriage of Sophie P. and the Oberste; furthermore, she criticizes pretentiousness and snobbery in the characters and actions of Charlotte P. and her husband. Burney also endorses interclass marriages as long as these relationships are entered into on the basis of respect and admiration

rather than passion and desperation. While the relationship between Caroline, a young lady of the middle class, and Sir John, a baronet, fails, the relationship between Evelina and Lord Orville, an earl, succeeds. Burney also criticizes the affected, arrogant behaviors of certain members of both the middle and upper classes through characters such as the Branghtons, Lady Louisa Larpent, Lord Merton, Sir Clement Willoughby, and Mr. Lovel.

Moreover, Burney and La Roche express similar sentiments regarding male behavior through their descriptions of Lord Orville, Sir Clement Willoughby, Lord Seymour, and Lord Derby. Both authors continue a criticism of rakish behavior that Richardson began in *Clarissa* as Willoughby and Derby share many characteristics with Lovelace. However, the graphic nature of these rakes' actions becomes less brutal with each novel. Although Lord Derby expresses desires for women of all sorts, he does not indulge in fantasies as delusional as those which Lovelace seems to enjoy. Derby kidnaps Sophie von Sternheim, but he does not treat her quite as cruelly as Lovelace treats Clarissa. Even though Derby rapes Sophie just as Lovelace rapes Clarissa, he neither drugs Sophie nor commits this crime in the presence of prostitutes. This development suggests that La Roche did not feel that such excessively violent reveries and acts were necessary to moving the narrative forward or to making her point about the negative side of passionate love. Sir Clement Willoughby's behavior towards Evelina is far tamer than Derby's conduct towards Sophie. He attempts to kidnap Evelina and behaves aggressively towards her, but he does not harm her in the same manner that Derby harms Sophie. The most offensive act that he commits is that of sending her a note under Lord Orville's name, and that exploit is only so upsetting to Evelina because she believes that Orville wrote the letter. This suggests that Burney understood the power of communication quite well and that she felt that such an act went far enough towards destroying a woman's peace of mind.

Additionally, both La Roche and Burney endorse the polite male behavior that became the preferred mode of conduct during the eighteenth century. Lord Seymour and Lord Orville exhibit many aspects of the sort of decency that was expected of men by the time *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* and *Evelina* were published. Although Seymour expresses the occasional burst of passion, he generally behaves rationally and respectfully. His response to the Löbaus' intentions for Sophie suggests that La Roche had some nostalgia for older modes of male behavior; however, his reaction on the whole shows that she preferred the newer, more polite forms of gentlemanly comportment. Orville's demeanor also illustrates the main components of polite male behavior from the early eighteenth century onwards. His willingness to transgress class boundaries and act so considerately towards Evelina, as well as almost any other character, shows that Burney fully embraced the concept of polite male behavior. La Roche may have had a slightly different attitude towards male behavior because she was a generation older than Burney. Despite this small disparity, both women had high expectations of how men should behave and expressed these sentiments through their novels.

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